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The purpose of an Urban Education Resources and Consultation Center would be to improve the educational program of inner-city schools by making available information and assistance on curriculum modifications that are appropriate to the urban school population. The focus would be on curriculum and instruction, including materials, content, teaching techniques, and evaluation procedures. Such topics as administration, finance, and organization would be considered only if they affected teaching and learning. One of the basic services the Center would perform would be the analysis of research on behavioral and social sciences in terms of its meaning for educational practice, particularly with reference to the educationally disadvantaged. Consultant services would be provided for schools and school systems interested in operating programs for disadvantaged children. In addition to consultants on the Center's staff, a list would be maintained of specialists available for particular assignments. The Center would be a link between schools testing particular ideas and programs and would facilitate cooperative efforts beyond the reach of any single school. It would locate schools and communities where pilot programs are in progress and where interesting ideas are being tested. A materials resources library would be established, where interested parties could study and try out various types of educational resources. Materials, reports, and proposals would be collected from schools, school systems, and universities, and would be abstracted for easy retrieval. Efforts would be made to disseminate findings from Center activities through publications, audiovisual materials, conferences, classes, and seminars.							
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D R A F T

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Elements of a Proposal for an
Urban Education Resources and Consultant Center

Initiated by

A. Harry Passow

The growth of concern and interest in the education of disadvantaged children on the part of program planners needs little detailing. The plethora of programs, the flurry of activities, the search for leads and direction accelerate as the need becomes obvious for attacking the educational problems of the inner city, and funds are made available in increasing amounts. The plight of the metropolitan school system--whether large city or inner suburban ring--has been extensively described in the literature, both lay and professional. The problems of affording optimum quality education for all children while tackling problems of academic retardation, transiency, racial imbalance, alienation, personnel and space shortages, are being considered by educational leaders at all levels.

To make available a central agency where interested educators can turn it is proposed that an Urban Education Resources and Consultation Center be established. The major purpose of such a Center would be to make available information and assistance for individuals and groups concerned with various aspects of educational planning. The Center would include the following:

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1. Analysis of Research on Behavioral and Social Sciences. There is a body of literature from the behavioral and social sciences which is already of considerable size and continues to grow. The research literature--much of which appears either in "fugitive" form or in journals--is not readily accessible to the practitioner and has not been adequately utilized by the educational planner or the classroom operator. A need for a "middle-man" able to synthesize and analyze research from behavioral and social sciences and interpret these in terms of their meaning for educational practice is an especially critical one in the field of the educationally disadvantaged. It is proposed that the Center undertake this role. Several approaches will be adapted to this problem area.

a. The model used by many of the national commissions (e.g., PSSC, BSCS, SMSG) dealing with subject matter wherein the subject matter specialists, the learning theorists, and the practitioners form a team for the preparation of materials represents one approach.

b. Another phase would engage insightful curriculum specialists and assign them the task of preparing working papers which would attempt to synthesize research and experimental findings from the behavioral sciences into meaningful guides for operational practice. These working papers would then serve as the basis for three to five day conferences involving behavioral scientists, curriculum specialists, and knowledgeable practitioners in the field. The working papers would then be revised and restudied before their suggestions are applied and tested and subsequently broadly disseminated. For example, at the pre-school level the rationale and research base for early intervention has continued to be developed.

The extrapolation of the findings in terms of their meaning for curriculum and materials has been relatively sparse. A monograph or other publication could be produced from the papers and conference proceedings.

c. A third phase would involve analysis of promising school proposals and practices by behavioral and social scientists as well as subject matter specialists. Detailed descriptions would be prepared of proposed programs, materials and practices to be submitted for critical analysis by a panel of behavioral and social scientists and subject matter specialists. It is envisioned that there will be all college or all university seminars that will deal with the instructional problems of the disadvantaged including reading, English as a second language, guidance, counseling, vocational education and other aspects. Two or three day seminars for discussion and synthesis would follow the preparation of papers analyzing such proposals.

d. These activities will aim at developing a dimension found infrequently in educational planning--systematic critical analyses of proposals by individuals with specialized competencies. There is a proliferation of projects some of which have a valid rationale which are either explicit or implicit, but many of which are simply good intentioned. Sorting these out or at least clarifying the research and theory basis will be part of the focus of the Center.

2. Consultant Services. The Center would provide, or arrange for, direct assistance to schools and school systems in initiating and operating programs designed for the educationally disadvantaged. This consultant service would involve help with the design of programs to be tested,

aid in initiating and conducting necessary planning and in-service programs for personnel who will operate such programs, and help in designing procedures for evaluating the effectiveness and consequence of such programs.

Some consultation service would be conducted by the Center's staff. The Center would develop and maintain rosters of available consultants, locating specialists as required for the particular assignments.

Services of the Center would include providing help in determining the specific kinds of consultant personnel needed and aiding in more effective utilization of consultant services.

3. Provide Liason Amongst Schools for Program Innovation and Experimentation. The Center would provide a link amongst schools and school systems testing out particular ideas and programs. One sample of the kind of cooperative enterprise which might be extended is the recently initiated study of the educational value of pre-kindergarten programs for the educationally disadvantaged child suggested by the New York State Education Department. Some nine school systems operating pre-school programs for the disadvantaged are cooperatively evaluating the various aspects and program procedures for their particular programs. While it would be difficult for any single school or school system to undertake an experimental design which could be used to test these different aspects of pre-school programs, by cooperatively undertaking pieces of a larger research design, it becomes possible to test out the value of such pre-school programs in a more comprehensive and detailed fashion. In similar fashion, alternate subject matter programs could be tested.

(Seven mathematics programs are being compared and assessed with some 51 classes in 21 school systems by the Talented Youth Project of the Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute).

4. Location of "Pilot Programs". The Center would undertake to locate particular schools and communities in which pilot programs are in operation and unusual ideas are being tested. Interested individuals can observe and discuss pilot programs in operation. By locating such programs and systematizing the procedures for observing, it may be possible to improve the visiting processes and make such programs more readily accessible for observation. Experiences with demonstration centers developed for other kinds of educational programs (e.g., Illinois' Program Centers for Gifted) will be assessed for ways of increasing the effectiveness of such centers in making available information and insights that are indeed pilot!

5. A Materials Resources Library. A library would be designed along the lines of a modern instructional materials center with all kinds of educational resources readily available for study, examination, and try-out. Included would be all kinds of teaching and learning materials, ranging from various types of published matter to technological devices and including films, tapes, programmed materials, laboratory equipment, manipulative devices, etc. A model here may be the Minnesota National Curriculum Laboratory which provides a center of resources and materials for testing various kinds of mathematics programs under different conditions, including populations.

a. Where available, research and evaluative data related to the material would be made readily accessible. Critical analysis by appro-

priate specialists of such instructional materials would be provided.

b. The staff of the Center would systematically attempt to locate and secure materials so that producers and publishers would come to see the library as one of the prime sources for dissemination of information concerning their materials and equipment.

6. Clearing House. The Center will collect materials, reports, and proposals from various schools, school systems, universities and other sources dealing with the education of the disadvantaged. These materials and reports will be abstracted for quick retrieval. They will be subjected to critical analyses to determine the underlying rationale or theory (explicit or implicit). Practices and programs will be critically assessed in an attempt to pinpoint those elements which are based on sound research and theory. The aim will be to provide a meaningful rationale and research base for program planning at the local level utilizing more fully the insights derived from other ongoing projects.

The clearing house function would facilitate disseminating the information from this growing body of "fugitive" publications--reports, bulletins, guides, etc.--which are slow to find their way into journals and more formal publications. The delay in publication, added to the lag between idea and application results in a considerable time lapse in using this knowledge and insights. Hopefully, means will be found for shortcutting the process.

7. Dissemination Activities. Efforts will be made to disseminate the insights and knowledge derived from the various Center activities. These dissemination activities will take many forms. There will be

publications of pamphlets, books, papers and other materials as appropriate. Films and film strips, tapes and other audio-visual materials will be produced for teacher and administrative use as well as for student use. Seminars, work conferences, and classes will be scheduled as seem appropriate and at strategic places around the country. Existing avenues for dissemination--e.g., state, regional, and national professional meetings--will be judiciously used. Programmed instructional materials will be developed as needed.

Possibilities for dissemination of insights and of developed materials are many, particularly as the Center capitalizes on the insights and experiences derived by curriculum developers over the past few decades.

The purpose of this Center is to improve the educational program of the inner city school by providing basic information and insights on curriculum adaptations and modifications appropriate for the particular population in the modern urban metropolis. The focus of the Center is to be on curriculum and instruction--content, materials, methods, teaching strategies, and evaluation procedures. It is intended that administration, school organization, special services, finance, and other aspects of the school operation will not be considered except as they impinge directly on teaching and learning. The Center will not engage in basic research but will concern itself primarily with the developmental aspects.

"Curriculum" as applied here would not be limited to classroom instruction and learning alone. The urban school has increasingly moved out of the four walls of the classroom and the five to six hour day and is involved in a variety of learning and teaching which goes into the

community and far beyond. Obviously the training of teachers and other educational personnel would have to have a high priority for such a Center but aimed at the instructional aspects primarily. The problems of innovation and change in the large school system would be studied as an adjunct problem. However, the Center staff would serve as more than a mediator between the researcher and the practitioner: it would be a stimulator and director of both in so far as possible.

The Center will adapt, develop, and assess curriculum and teaching methods and strategies, instructional materials, and psychometric techniques appropriate to disadvantaged children and youth. The aim will be to provide better guides and resources for educational and political planners and to anticipate the problems of education in the large cities, particularly in the disadvantaged or depressed areas.